

Message Text

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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 092708

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL RPT MOGADISCIO 0771 SENT ACTION SECSTATE DTD 10 APR 78

QUOTE: S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 0771

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MASS, SO, US

SUBJ: THE ATTEMPTED COUP--SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON ITS
RAMIFICATIONS FOR US - SOMALI TIES

1. I STILL DO NOT HAVE A VERY CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT THE RAMIFICATIONS
OF THE APRIL 9 COUP ATTEMPT MAY BE. THE DIMENSIONS ARE VAGUE. I
BELIEVE IT WAS AN INTERNAL MILITARY AFFAIR, AND REASONABLY MINOR
AS THOSE THINGS GO, BUT I AM CONCERNED BY THE ABSENCE OF MORE
AUTHORITATIVE REPORTING FROM THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. THERE ARE
QUITE CANDIDLY MORE QUESTIONS IN MY MIND RIGHT NOW THAN THERE
ARE ANSWERS. DOES THE ATTEMPTED COUP FORETELL A MAJOR PURGE OF
THE MILITARY AND PARTY APPARATUS? WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON
THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S WRIT OUTSIDE OF MOGADISCIO? WILL THE EVENTS

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TEND TO EXPAND OR LIMIT SIAD'S PERSONAL POWER? HOW WILL THE ATTEMPT
COLOR HIS PERCEPTIONS OF THE GSDR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED
STATES?

2. UNTIL I AM BETTER ABLE ADDRESS THESE QUESTIONS I AM RELUCTANT TO
COMMENT ON THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ATTEMPTED COUP ON US SOMALI
RELATIONS. THERE ARE ALREADY REPORTS CURRENT IN MOGADISCIO THAT THE

PLOTTERS WOULD NOT HAVE STRUCK HAD SIAD BEEN ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE
A ACTIVE SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES. I DISMISS THESE REPORTS
AS SELF SERVING, ALTHOUGH THE ARGUMENT IS PLAUSIBLE. I CANNOT
ESCAPE THE CONCLUSION THAT THE ATTEMPT WILL DELAY A RESPONSE TO
THE GSDR ON WEAPONS SUPPLY. INDEED, I RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDE IT MUST.
I DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, WE OUGHT TO BE PREPARED TO MOE AS SOON
AS THE MATTER COMES INTO PERSPECTIVE, AND I THINK THAT FOCUS
MAY NOT REQUIRE TOO MUCH TIME TO ACHIEVE, PERHAPS A FEW DAYS. A
DECISION TO COME TO SIAD'S SUPPORT WITH MILITARY HARDWARE
INEVITABLY ENTAILS SOME RISK. IT WILL NEVER BE A DECISION FREE
OF CONSEQUENCES. IF WE ARE SEEN TO ACT IN THE NEAR FUTURE IT WILL
REDOUND TO OUR CREDIT. IF WE DELAY INORDINATELY, BASING THAT ON THE
ATTEMPTED COUP OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, THE UNITED STATES WILL
BE PERCEIVED AS EVEN MORE RELUCTANT TO PLAY A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN
THE HORN THAN SIAD NOW SEES IT TO BE.
LOUGHRAN UNQUOTE VANCE

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